

AMENDMENTS

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 1-7 and 10-15.

Please amend the claims as follows:

8. (Currently amended) A method for the negative regulation of the keratinization of hair, comprising administering an amount of a protease-related protein effective to result in negative regulation of keratinization of hair, wherein said protease-related protein has protease activity, has homology to the kallikrein family, and is encoded by a nucleotide sequence hybridizing with the complement of the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:1 at 20°C below the DNA melting.

9. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 8, wherein said protease-related protein is administered in the form of a nucleic acid expressing it.

16. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 9 or 18, wherein said nucleic acid expressing said protein comprises:

- (a) the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:1;
- (b) a nucleic acid encoding the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2; or
- (c) the complement of (a) or (b).

17. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 9 or 18, wherein said nucleic acid expressing said protein comprises an expression plasmid comprising:

- (a) the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:1;

- (b) a nucleic acid encoding the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2; or
- (c) the complement of (a) or (b).

18. (Original) The method of Claim 8, comprising administering a polynucleotide encoding said protease-related protein and expressing a therapeutically effective amount of the same.

19. (Withdrawn) A composition for the negative regulation of the keratinization of hair comprising a protease-related protein and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier, wherein said protease-related protein is encoded by a nucleotide sequence hybridizing with the complement of the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:1 at 20°C below the DNA melting.

20. (Withdrawn) The composition of Claim 19, wherein said protease-related protein comprises the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2.

21. (Currently amended) A method for the negative regulation of the keratinization of hair comprising administering an amount of a protease-related protein effective to result in negative regulation of keratinization of hair, wherein said protease-related protein comprises the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2.

22. (Withdrawn) A method for the negative regulation of the keratinization of hair, comprising administering a therapeutically effective amount of the composition of Claim 19.

23. (Withdrawn) A method for the negative regulation of the keratinization of hair, comprising administering a therapeutically effective amount of the composition of Claim 20.